(c) if so, the programme drawn up for different States; and

(d) the specific schemes drawn up for the expansion of telecommunications in Orissa during the 8th Five Year Plan

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA) : (a) The following actions, *inter-alia*, were taken during the 7th Plan for expansion of the telecommunication network : —

—Net addition of about 19.6 lakh lines of local switching capacity

—Net addition of about 16.9 lakh Direct Exchange Lines

—Extension of Subscriber Trunk Dialling facility to cover 80% of the network

—Net addition of about 6800 Long Distance Public Telephones in rural areas

—Capacity addition of about 10760 telex lines

—Commissioning of about 53 Satellite Earth Stations

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. Subject to availability of resources, the main programme common for all States include :—

(i) to expand network to contain waiting list to one year in all exchange systems with a capacity of 5000 lines and above and to make telephones practically available on demand in other exchange areas;

(ii) to provide Public Telephone in every gram panchayat;

(iii) to continue to provide telex connections on demand.

(d) The draft 8th Plan proposals of Orissa Telecom Circle envisage addition of 94,000 lines of local switching capacity, 61,000 Direct Exchange Lines, 690 telex lines and 10 national telex exchanges and public telephone for each gram panchayat.

Passenger ferry service between Rameshwaram and Talaimannar

1588. SHRI PASUMPON THA. KIRUTTINAN : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been a consistent demand to renew the passenger ferry service between Rameshwaram in Tamil Nadu and Talaimannar in Sri Lanka;

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government's of Sri Lanka and India;

(c) whether any action has been initiated; if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if the answer to part (c) is in negative, the specific reasons thereof?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI K. P. UNNIKRISHNAN) : (a) to (c) The Government has recently received a request from the Government of Sri Lanka for early resumption of the ferry service between Rameshwaram and Talaimannar. The Government may consider the resumption of the ferry service after tying up the various infrastructural and logistic factors, both at the Indian and Sri Lankan ends.

(d) Does not arise.

Smuggling of arms into Punjab

1589. SHRI HARVENDRA SINGH HANSPAL : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the newsitem which appeared in the Indian Express of 27th April, 1990 under the caption "Large number of arms smuggled into Punjab";

(b) if so, whether a large number of arms and ammunitions are smuggled from Pakistan in Punjab;

(c) whether Government have recently taken any steps in this regard ; and

(d) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI SUBODH KANT SAHAY) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) It is true that arms and ammunition continue to be smuggled into India.

(c) and (d) Appropriate measures to check infiltration, smuggling and bringing of arms and ammunition into India from Pakistan have been taken. The drive against active smugglers, especially those having nexus with the terrorists/extremists is also continuing.

Providing the PCOs in the Village Panchayats in Rajasthan

1590. SHRI KAMAL MORARKA : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of village panchayats in Rajasthan which have been provided with the PCOs during the period November, 1989 to April, 1990; and

(b) what is the number of villages in Rajasthan which are having post offices?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA) : (a) 49 village Panchayats in Rajasthan have been provided with PCOs during the period November, 1989 to April 1990.

(b) There are 8939 numbers of villages which are having post offices in Rajasthan.

Opening of new post offices in the Country

1591. SHRI KAMAL MORARKA : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of new post offices opened in the country during the period November, 1989 to April, 1990;

(b) the number of these which exist in the rural areas; and

(c) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to open small P.Os. in remote areas to bring these neglected ares into the main stream ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA) : (a) and (b) During the period the opening of 814 new post offices including 749 for rural areas has been sanctioned. Information as to the number of post offices actually opened in rural and other areas is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

(c) The programme of extension of postal network is implemented in each Annual Plan, the main objective of which is to provide communication facilities to remote areas by means of branch post offices in most cases and sub-post offices in some cases.

Agreement for the co-production and financing the Film "Gandhi"

1592. DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that as per the agreement for the co-production and financing the film